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Title: **Conducting Population-Based HIV/AIDS Survey: Challenges and Integrated Experiential Solutions**

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Meeting/Conference: Being a discussion at the 18th Texas HIV/STD Conference held on October 28-31, 2012, at the Hyatt Regency Austin Hotel in Austin, Texas.

Problem/challenge being addressed: HIV/AIDS surveys have been conducted for a variety of purposes and on a diverse set of populations with established records of successes and disappointments under different scenarios. This session discusses the issues and challenges faced in locating, recruiting, tracking and interviewing HIV/AIDS patients receiving care in outpatient clinics. Recognizing the socio-economic and cultural diversity of the target clients population, we developed a varied approach to track and interview patients. The session also describes the approach taken to maintain the methodological rigor of the evaluation, which includes adapting a flexible interview protocol, maintaining the objectivity of the interviewer; maintaining the independence of the interviewer from job roles; and protecting client confidentiality among others.

Program description: The Medical Monitoring Project (MMP) is a surveillance project designed to learn more about the experiences and needs of people who are receiving care for HIV. It provides information about the behaviors, medical care, and health status of people living with HIV/AIDS. The project uses a three stage-probability sampling method to achieve annual representative samples of adults (18 years and above) receiving HIV/AIDS care in Houston/Harris County. A sample of about 400 patients is selected each year from participating health care facilities in Houston/Harris County. Patients are recruited for a face-to-face or telephone interview. The patient's medical chart abstraction is then used to complement the interview data.

Implications for HIV/STD prevention, treatment, and/or care services: Knowing the potential challenges and pitfalls in recruiting sampled HIV/AIDS patients and the recommended guidelines and solutions could help improve the representativeness of the sample, reduced the apparent bias of the respondents, and yield more diverse participants. Information gathered from the medical monitoring project may be used by prevention planning groups, policy leaders, health care providers, and people living with HIV/AIDS to highlight disparities in care and services and advocate for additional resources.

Keywords: Survey, Medical Monitoring Project, HIV/AIDS, Houston, Texas